



INSTITUTE FOR INTEGRATED TRANSITIONS

 THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

JOHN D. GERHART CENTER
FOR PHILANTHROPY
AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



Supporting Countries in Transition

A Framework Guide for Foundation Engagement



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INTRODUCTION

A Framework for Transitional Grantmaking

When a war draws to a close or an authoritarian regime falls, the world stops to take note. These are moments of ‘history in the making’. After years of protracted conflict or repressive rule, new horizons for profound reformulation of the social contract can unexpectedly arise. While experiences in places ranging from Somalia to Iraq to Afghanistan may give grounds for caution about the path a transition can take, scores of other cases demonstrate that these historical moments are above all an invitation to act. This publication offers a tailored framework for private foundations to do so, drawing directly on the experience and ideas of the sector itself. The framework is premised on the evident fact that the strategic considerations a donor faces in such contexts are fundamentally different from those faced in contexts of ongoing conflict or dictatorship, or of mature and stable democracies.

Two possible frameworks could guide engagement in societies transitioning out of armed conflict or repression. At one extreme, a radical change in the external context could lead a foundation to adopt a correspondingly radical risk-taking or ‘seize-the-day’ approach, prompting it to leap into action based on mistaken assumptions about the end results desired by citizens of the transitioning country. At the opposite extreme, a ‘stay-the-course’ framework could be adopted. A foundation already engaged in the country might prefer to maintain the same partners and activities, knowing the old actors better than the new. A foundation not engaged in the country could stay the course by simply staying out, on account of discomfort with an unfamiliar and rapidly-shifting political environment.

A better framework rejects both these extremes, offering a middle course that is logical in light of the unique opportunity for impact a transition creates and responsible in the context of the many unknowns about its destination. That framework, presented here, is one of ‘informed risk-taking’. It combines two basic elements: an understanding by the donor that heightened risk is the acceptable corollary of enhanced opportunity for impact; and a matching commitment to expand due diligence in relation to the country in question.

The logic of informed risk-taking is advisable for any committed philanthropist or institutional donor, not only for private foundations, but is especially relevant for the latter. First, private foundations have greater independence and flexibility with their funds compared to governments and other publically accountable bodies, and thus a greater inherent capacity to take risks. Secondly, they can respond to opportunities more quickly than large bilateral and multilateral donors that work within elaborate regulatory structures. Thirdly, due to their smaller scale of financial resources, foundations have a greater self-interest to be creative and catalytic in their funding priorities. In transitional settings that are often crowded with other actors, they have every reason to leverage their comparative advantages.

This guide contains three main sections. The **first section** offers an overview and conceptual frame for understanding contemporary national transitions that face familiar challenges but also new global complications. As used here, the term ‘transition’ refers to the opening created by the formal end of an authoritarian regime or armed conflict in which new possibilities for transformative political, economic and socio-cultural change become possible. The focus is particularly on the earliest period of such a transition, when events unfold most quickly, and multiple paths are open to achieve important structural advances in democratic participation, economic reform, rule of law and human security.

The **second section** explores the comparative advantages and limitations of private foundations in relation to the larger aid sector operating in transitional contexts. Lessons learned from private foundations involved over many years in cross-border grantmaking receive special attention. Because local philanthropy also plays an important role during transitions – and helps sustain support over the long run – consideration is given to how international and local foundations can work effectively together in transitional environments.

The **third section** presents informed risk-taking as a logical and practical framework to help foundations achieve disproportionate positive outcomes through the programmes they undertake in particular transitions. Drawing on the sector’s collective wisdom following decades of global experience in transitional settings, as well as aspects of the broader aid industry experience, it gives actionable guidance on the strategic questions and considerations that can help foundations to put the principle of informed risk-taking into practice.

The aggregate impact of the foundation sector’s efforts to assist societies in transition is not well documented. Even anecdotally, though, it demonstrates the unique and deeply important role foundations can and should play. The aim of this guide is to help them do so with maximum coherence and effect at a time of strategic reflection in the sector. It shows the way for foundations to achieve disproportionate impact with their investments when, often abruptly, wars end or dictatorships fall and the possibilities of a brighter future suddenly grow real.

Section I: Challenges and Opportunities of Contemporary Transition

What is underway now is a sort of delayed footnote to the 'third wave' of democratisation that the world witnessed prior to and at the end of the Cold War – a wave that started in Southern Europe, then went to Latin America, then to Eastern Europe and then to some Asian and African countries, but that to a large extent bypassed the Arab world. Now we are entering an Arab chapter that, delayed by 20 years, had not been opened with the others or with the same movement. – Interview with transition expert

The backstory

Between 1974 and 1990, more than 30 countries in Europe and South America entered transitions out of authoritarian rule, in what political scientist Samuel Huntington described as the third wave of democratisation. In the 1990s, other instances of post-authoritarian transition arose in a number of places, ranging from Haiti to Ghana to Thailand. Along the way, the study of political transitions became a field in its own right, as scholars tried to identify the key pathways of democratic consolidation following regime shifts.

Civil wars raged in a number of parts of the world during the same decades. Some, including those in Central America and Southern Africa, arose and worsened during – and often on account of – the Cold War. Others intensified in the first decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, such as in the former Yugoslavia, West Africa and Central Africa, where dictatorships often overlapped with civil wars. In many cases the conflicts were formally concluded through negotiated agreements or peace accords. In time, experts coined terms such as 'post-conflict transition', 'peace-making' and 'peace-building', as the international community mounted systematic efforts to prevent future bloodshed.

Yet, by the early 2000s, strong doubts emerged about the idea of transitional pathways – whether post-authoritarian or post-conflict – as the consolidation of democracy and peace frequently failed or stalled, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2001, democracy expert Tom Carothers famously criticised a then-prevalent 'transition paradigm' that was based on a range of faulty assumptions (e.g., that countries moving away from dictatorship are necessarily transitioning toward democracy; that elections necessarily lead to a deepening of democracy; and that the underlying structural conditions in transitional countries are minor factors compared to political will). New terms such as 'failed states' and 'fragile states' soon emerged, reflecting a growing realism about the difficult terrain in which many transitions arise and the unfulfilled promises they can leave behind.

Of course, the balance sheet of the last 40 years has not been entirely negative. There have been numerous important cases of post-authoritarian transition (e.g., Spain, Chile, Ghana, South Africa, Indonesia, the Baltic states and Poland) and post-conflict transition (e.g., Mozambique, Croatia, Northern Ireland and Liberia) in which the likelihood of a return to tyranny or war has receded. Globally, fewer dictatorships and civil wars exist – arguably a sign of progress in democratisation and international peace-building efforts.

Yet, the tumultuous transitions underway in the Arab region serve as a reminder of at least three things:

- The continuing currency of the term and concept of transition that societies continue to apply to themselves even as they lurch in and out of crisis;
- The deeply-contested nature of nearly all facets of a transition out of war or repressive rule; and
- The common set of problems faced by post-conflict and post-authoritarian societies alike during the early years of a transition.

Common challenges

The typical challenges of transitional contexts, described below, manifest themselves in very different ways among societies, but the differences tend to be of degree rather than kind.

Conflicting goals: Transitions require an elevated ability to balance short-term crisis management with long-term planning. By their nature, they are not static moments in which leaders can plan and act in relative calm. Yet, because a transitional government will expect its citizens to defer urgent needs while the process of change gradually unfolds, the articulation of a long-term vision – an ultimate destination – is crucial. Groups with different ideologies or identities may nevertheless find it difficult to produce a shared national vision.

The power of the past: The formal demise of a regime can open new possibilities for transformation but also reactivate old mind-sets and conflicts. The roots of a country's past problems will often display themselves in new and dangerous ways, including sectarian splits in the electoral arena or counterproductive show trials. Nostalgia for a romanticised past – when there was more order or more household income – may grow and spur the rise of populist or authoritarian leaders who politicise sub-national identities.

Leadership gaps and spoilers: Even a well-intentioned new political class will often lack the basic skills of modern governance required to guide a transition. The leader of the country might be a former schoolteacher who has lived abroad for the last twenty years, and the finance minister a recent law school graduate. Such circumstances are ripe for exploitation by potential spoilers – whether security services, disgruntled old guard or regional actors. The risks are compounded by weak parliaments, in which embryonic political parties operate without prior experience and basic skills in coalition-building.

Dysfunctional public institutions: Times of transition frequently reveal that central institutions of the state are either non-existent or thoroughly corrupted. The civil service, often bloated and unprofessional, may hold the power to undermine new state actors if its interests are not addressed. The justice system typically lacks the public's trust. Police and other security forces may remain under the de facto direction of the military or some predatory element of politics. In the absence of functioning institutions, organised or petty crime networks or more ad hoc forms of terror or political violence can grow.

Weak non-state sectors: Local civil society organisations often play a key role in overturning dictators or ushering in peace, but the transitional period that follows may expose variable capacity to shape a new social and political agenda. Similarly, the media's limited ability to evolve into an independent and effective fourth estate may become apparent. The private sector may lean heavily toward previously-favoured cronies who lack the capacity to operate profitably in an open global

economy. Other businesses may leave the country, taking with them expertise and capital at a time when budget deficits are widening, and governments are compelled to reduce public spending.

The international avalanche: Since the end of the Cold War, international financial and technical assistance actors – aid agencies, multilateral bodies and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – have become a significant factor in almost every attempted transition. They typically arrive *en masse*, offering far-reaching expertise and support, but with limited coordination or agreed standards. The international flurry of activity often outstrips local absorption capacity and peaks early, moving out when new crises or more attractive opportunities arise elsewhere. Confusion and frustration increase among local actors, in some cases provoking a counter-reaction of greater restrictions on those who remain in the country.

The upside

Actors engaged in transitions must actively anticipate and address these challenges. None can be ignored. At the same time, it would be illogical to allow them to divert attention from what is, at core, a critical and time-sensitive opening for a country to break with the primary causes of past disorder and chart a new and better path forward.

Transitions should be viewed primarily as invitations to action. They are the critical junctures of history when, rather than moving by steps, a society can potentially spring forward and redefine itself for the better. As Rachel Kleinfeld writes, “while time unfolds at the same rate of sixty seconds every minute, in politics and society there are punctuations, windows of opportunity in which sixty seconds can be worth far more than the same amount of time a few months down the road”. This is the essence of a transitional moment. It is structurally and politically distinct from periods characterised either by stagnation (e.g., contexts of entrenched dictatorship) or degeneration (e.g., contexts of escalating armed conflict). While its end-point may be debatable, its starting point is rarely in doubt.

The first few years of a transition are typically the most important, as the window for reform is at its widest. While the consolidation of democracy, development, the rule of law and security is a long-term process, reform in these initial years can set a transition on a positive track. The euphoria that often greets transitions can subside quickly and turn to disenchantment when high expectations for rapid change are not met, but early and visible benefits can help to create and maintain a sense of hope and optimism. In the best of cases, the early months and years can create a stronger social compact, both between the state and the citizens and among the main groups within the society. It is above all in this sense that transitions present the possibility to achieve disproportionate positive outcomes.

Evolving trends

What is in my mind so special about transitions in the Middle East and North Africa is the extreme polarisation of discourse, the extreme fluidity of legitimacy and the extreme generational divide along a hope-despair spectrum. Information flows are faster than ever before, and visual information is much more easily shared. Many of the grand narratives of economic and political development have been discredited, and no new grand narrative has emerged to take its place, leaving space for new approaches. – Interview with foundation director

Changes in the global political landscape since the end of the Cold War have added new layers of challenge and opportunity for successful transition. The most commented aspect is the revolution in communication technologies. Transitions today are accelerated by 24/7 news cycles, the immediacy of social media and crowd-sourcing of real-time video. Constitutions are less likely to be drafted over months or years behind closed doors, while controversial trials are often broadcast live to the public. This speeding up of information brings with it a heightened demand for broad participation. Yet, the luxury of time and insulation that enabled leaders to form new skill sets, build viable coalitions, and achieve consensus around the new order no longer exists. Privacy, too, is under greater threat, since new technologies can become a tool for illegal surveillance or other mischief.

Current transitions also have the misfortune of occurring in the midst of a major economic slowdown in the Western world. Arab countries receive far less support than did earlier transitions in Southern Africa or Eastern Europe, though wealthy regional monarchies such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia are, with limited transparency, filling some of the gap. The Western world is also suffering a growing legitimacy crisis in Muslim-majority and post-colonial countries long suspicious of a *mission civilisatrice*. This in turn has complicated the acceptance of new international policy norms (e.g., Responsibility to Protect) and institutions (e.g., the International Criminal Court) that, with increased transnational threats (e.g., climate change, nuclear proliferation and terrorism), form part of the contemporary global environment for countries emerging out of war or repressive rule.

Nevertheless, many of the challenges in places such as Burma, Tunisia and the Ivory Coast are familiar to a scholar of past waves of transition. Common patterns, syndromes and policy tensions can be observed across profoundly different political, economic and socio-cultural contexts. At the same time, it is evident that transitions remain domestic affairs defined, above all, by national, as well as sub-national, realities. Simply put, transitions stand a better chance of success when informed by experience but addressed through the prism of existing local norms and structures, however fragile or inchoate, rather than purportedly universal norms and best practices.

Also noteworthy is a growing recognition of the importance of political, economic and socio-cultural 'inclusiveness' as an overarching priority in transitions. When it is on the agenda, it can give stability and direction to an otherwise unpredictable process. When it is absent, everything risks falling apart, as in Egypt where exclusionary politics have undermined the opening created through a broadly-based popular revolt. As will be shown, an inclusiveness agenda item may offer one of the most effective ways for foundations to pursue and achieve disproportionate positive outcomes that would be unattainable in more ordinary periods.

A word on disproportionate outcomes

The concept of disproportionate outcomes is not restricted to transitional settings. It could be an apt term to use, for example, to describe a humanitarian grantmaking response after a natural disaster: absent the response, millions of lives could be at risk. However, the disproportionate outcome opportunity in a transition is distinct: it relates to the opportunity for transformative political, economic and social reform, and it stems from a positive change in context. Consider the following analogy.

The election of a new administration in the U.S. is seen as a window of opportunity by the victorious party's political and financial backers. Supporters 'switch the chip' when their side is elected to power: they shift from opposition and advocacy to proposition and reform.

Transitions out of authoritarian rule and armed conflict are similar, yet hold greater promise. Whereas in the above example the change in approach is driven by, and conditioned on, a fixed electoral cycle, in the case of a transition from dictatorship or war the scope for potential change is exponentially higher. The window of opportunity is not merely for reform within a generally fixed and stable system, but for reform of the entire system and of the social contract with, and between, citizens. If it is logical for foundations to re-orient some giving in the context of a changed administration following an important election, then it is doubly so in the context of a transition out of armed conflict or repression.

As will be shown, though, precisely because more is at stake in such a transition, the required degree of prudence is higher. Since a whole order is being overturned, potentially forever, those who stand to lose the most will likely be more active and destructive than they might be in relation to a lost election within a system based on rules they generally accept – as was seen, for example, with the tragic escalation of violence in Iraq triggered by the De-Baathification policy following the 2003 overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

Compared to the change of an administration within a stable democratic system, the consequence of getting things wrong in a post-authoritarian or post-conflict transition may also be greater: early errors can produce hard-to-change frameworks and systems that facilitate a continuous stream of bad policy. And yet, the risks that accompany transitions are simply the flipside of the disproportionate impact opportunities they present. In transitions, risk and reward go hand in hand.

Section 2: Roles and Strengths of the Foundation Sector

Private philanthropy, defined as the mobilisation of private assets for the public good, is in the midst of a fertile period of expansion around the world. After many decades in which the range of foundation-giving models was relatively unchanged, the last 15 years have seen a proliferation of new and hybrid types. Business and investment principles inform venture philanthropy, while community-based foundations increasingly devolve decision-making power to citizens. Some kinds of social investing allow for expectations of a recycling of capital rather than spending out through grants. In addition, as philanthropy becomes more global, large foundations now collate funds from thousands of donors to support causes like environmental protection or women's empowerment (e.g., Global Greengrants Fund and Mama Cash). Meanwhile, Kiva, Global Giving and others enable individual donors to support causes far from their home communities through internet-based solicitation and distribution channels. The basic framework elaborated in this guide may provide useful suggestions for any private donor interested in making a contribution to support transitions.

The specific focus taken here, though, is on internationally-active private foundations whose primary operating model is grantmaking to other groups or individuals in order to address structural issues, build stronger institutions or drive socio-developmental goals. Grantmaking foundations take a variety of forms, with assets possibly drawn from an individual, a family, a corporation or an aggregate of donors. They may channel their support through service sectors like health or education, assist disadvantaged groups such as refugees or prisoners or promote social 'goods' such as human rights, culture or rule of law. Beyond grantmaking, their support may also take the form of knowledge transfer, network-building and convening. The range of foundation models and activities is ever-growing.

The value of grantmaking

If you pick the right countries, you can have the most astonishing impact even with £10,000. You can go into the same place at a different time and have a completely different result. But sadly, not enough grantmakers are transfixed by these moments – these times in a country's history when everything speeds up, when there are opportunities for grantmaking to help breathe new oxygen into a society. This is the real joy of doing the work of a grantmaker. – Interview with foundation leader

Catalytic philanthropy, in which foundations proactively set out to design the solutions to an intractable social problem, has gained in popularity. It has also sparked counter-arguments in support of the more traditional model of giving that is designed to serve needs identified beyond foundation boardrooms. While both have their place in the philanthropic landscape, a strong case can be made for grantmaking in support of social change in a transition setting, with heightened needs for both local knowledge and capacity-building.

Grantmaking involves a transfer of funds to unrelated entities, usually in response to an application or programme proposal. Ideally, this establishes a dialectic where the grantee proposes ideas

and activities to advance its mission, and the foundation responds with funding where an overlap in mission is identified. Some of the most innovative ideas regarding how foundation funds should be spent emerge outside of the institution, especially in times of great change. In transitional settings where an intense national dynamic is driving events that were largely unpredicted, a grantmaker's ability and willingness to be responsive to local needs is particularly welcome.

Foundation grantmaking may take a number of forms: core funding for an organisation's basic expenses; project-specific grants (both cash and in-kind); or leveraged arrangements in which a grantee is challenged to raise additional funds by a matching opportunity. Grantmaking also varies along a temporal continuum, from short-term seed funding to new entities to establish 'proof of concept' and encourage other donors to step in, to medium-term project-implementation grants. At the far end of the continuum are grants with a five-to-ten-year horizon that incorporate elements of internal institutional capacity development. Grant sizes similarly range from small study or travel awards to investments of hundreds of thousands or, in some cases, millions of dollars over time.

In any of these forms, foundation grants hold the potential to impact the success of transitions in significant ways. Many foundations rightly take pride in having nurtured an opposition group that later produces the first post-revolutionary president, a think tank that generates the ideas that shape a future human rights policy or a mediated dialogue process that facilitates a vital compromise among political antagonists. While other activities foundations undertake, such as in-house research or external advocacy, can also be important in supporting such transitional outcomes, they cannot replace the core value and business of grantmaking.

Foundation platforms

Over the past decades, private foundations operating internationally have employed a variety of delivery platforms to carry out their transition-related philanthropy, with the specific choices varying by context. These include devolving grantmaking to an intermediary, hiring a local representative or establishing an in-country office. Foundations may even promote entirely new granting entities: Open Society Foundations' network model seeds the formation of national foundation affiliates based on recruiting local actors to governing boards and staff in transitional countries. These affiliates receive initial funding and technical support from the global network. Other international foundations have successfully promoted formation of localised community foundations in transitional settings in sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern and Central Europe where they did not previously exist. These community foundations often receive initial help from global support organisations, but adapt their operations to local conditions and norms.

A small but growing international infrastructure also exists to support foundation grantmaking efforts. This includes university-based philanthropy research centres (e.g., in Cairo, Beijing, and Indonesia), social investment incubators and regional or thematic membership-based networks. Such groups typically do not make grants, but they can take on important roles in transitions – for example, by providing a neutral convening platform for donors in an otherwise polarised setting or assistance in the gathering and transmission of timely information within and beyond transition settings. In addition, philanthropy infrastructure organisations can facilitate networking, advise new donors, provide peer learning and foster inter-foundation collaboration in areas of shared interest. Increasingly they are also sources of technical support for monitoring and evaluating grant portfolios and reflecting upon the ultimate societal impact of foundation programmes.

Crossing borders

*We need to end the idea of the distinction between local and international. Our Trust, which is based in Africa and works in 18 countries, would still be seen as a local in the current way of thinking. This must end. What we really need are networks of interest across the local-international divide. – **Roundtable comment***

The relationship between ‘foreign’ and ‘local’ foundations – all equally diverse in the size, focus, and structure of their operations – is an important consideration in transitional contexts. It is first worth asking, though, what makes a foundation fall within one of these categories. In general, a foundation is considered local when the sources of its assets and governance are indigenous to the country in question. A European foundation with a 50-year presence in an Asian country may have extraordinary local knowledge and contacts, but it will not tend to be considered local if its assets and locus of governance are external.

Local foundations may be registered as corporations, non-profits, trusts or, alternatively, take sui generis forms such as religious endowments (e.g., Islamic *awqaf*) or community funds (e.g., in rural Africa). As part of the recent movement toward hybrid philanthropic forms, some foundation structures are now truly a mix of local and international, with both dimensions present in their governance and sourcing of funds. These models have grown out of extensive experience in determining the optimal mix of externally-directed assistance and encouragement of local donor capacity over a long time horizon.

In their more standard forms, cross-border and local donors have much to offer each other: the former when they have important prior transition experience and the latter when they can shorten the learning curve for newly-arriving donors. Local foundations enter a transition moment with more in-depth knowledge of the country, which can be critical to making nuanced decisions about grant support in a shifting or unfamiliar environment. As will be shown, because of their permanent tenure, local foundations also have a key role to play in sustaining important programmes when foreign donors exit several years after the onset of the transition.

A strategic niche

*Private foundations have the advantage of not having to answer to anyone but themselves. As a government agency, we have a huge responsibility to the taxpayer, and we have to account in detail for all the money we spend. – **Interview with aid agency leader***

Foundations, as well as many theme-based global funds, possess more independence and flexibility than donors such as bilateral agencies, private corporations and multilateral agencies. This takes on special relevance during national transitions.

Private foundations with a perpetual endowment and independent board typically have the greatest flexibility of response when transitions take place. Other foundation forms, while important, often have additional constituencies involved in decision-making and thus potentially less flexibility. This is the case, for example, with corporate or bank foundations, governmental foundations or political party foundations, though some of these operate with considerable agility. Social investment organisations, such as venture philanthropy foundations, may fall in between: they face the task of identifying local entrepreneurs and matching them with investors who are willing to risk their capital in unpredictable settings.

While bilateral and multilateral aid agencies often operate on fixed, multi-year budget cycles, private philanthropy can be more nimble. Whereas the former may require legally-complex consultations with public officials or parliaments, the latter needs only simple approval from its board of directors to engage in a transition. For private foundations, polling numbers and the requirements of periodic elections are not looming influences on decision-making. This relative freedom of action is matched by a unique ability to change course in response to new developments once programming begins. Foundations also have comparatively greater leeway to support non-established, emerging or informal groups, at the forefront of change, whereas aid agencies may be restricted to making grants only to established groups that pass through rigorous auditing procedures.

The flexibility enjoyed by private philanthropy also extends to staffing. Foundations can recruit personnel in unfettered competitions in which nationality, rank or other considerations do not apply. Programme personnel at foundations typically enjoy longer tenure than their counterparts in public donor agencies, allowing them to develop more in-depth thematic and country expertise. These sectoral advantages give private foundations special impetus to take up the disproportionate impact opportunities presented by transitions.

Scale and acupuncture

Bilateral money is channelled through governments since they do not want to undermine sovereign states. Philanthropic capital is not. It is precious because it is genuine risk capital. Politicians are scared by the press. Philanthropic money is not accountable in the same way, and so it can make large bets. – Interview with foundation leader

Although exact data on the comparative percentage of private versus public grantmaking in transitions is unavailable, most public agencies have far larger financial resources than foundations to invest in transition programming. This is so even as overseas development assistance, today approximately \$100 billion per annum globally, is in general decline.

Yet, operating at a smaller scale does not necessarily imply having smaller impact. Almost three years into Egypt's transition, government reserves are dangerously low and require massive infusions of cash. These are being provided by some Gulf States and even through internal transfers from the Egyptian armed forces. By contrast, within the civil society sector, many worthy initiatives are struggling to find small amounts of start-up funding. Local charitable giving is directed largely to humanitarian causes; few are willing to support social enterprise start-ups or make grants to transitional justice projects or fledgling community groups. When the Ford Foundation responded in 2011 with a special appropriation for Egypt, important local initiatives for youth leadership and civic education, independent media and gender projects were jump-started. Some of the large multilateral agreements in these fields have yet to be fully implemented.

This kind of advantage invites a comparison with acupuncture, which has sometimes been used as an analogy to describe private philanthropy's role. Identifying a suitable site and applying just the right pressure is the skill an acupuncturist brings to the art of healing. Foundations may do the same in transitions. Well-planned portfolios of grants to a targeted and vetted set of organisations, while modest in size compared to World Bank or European Union investments, can set in motion vital processes. Even small sums, if well-applied, can have system-wide outcomes that may strongly contribute to the success of a transition.

Challenges of practice

Years ago you could directly fund organisations in many countries around the world in transitions, and it would be completely accepted, but now Western money is more tainted. I don't know what the equivalent would be, but if Iran, for example, started funding the Canadian NGOs dealing with domestic issues, that would cause eyebrows to be raised in Canada. So the legitimacy and authority of the model we bring as foundations to these societies is no longer unquestioned and unchallenged; there are other frameworks which are often much more attractive. That is a big challenge in a multi-polar world with conflicting values. – Interview with foundation trustee

This guide makes the case for internationally-active grantmaking foundations to deepen their engagement in transitional contexts. Yet, doing so also requires an examination of challenges undeniably faced by the sector.

First, the complex history of relations between Western and non-Western societies can impact a foundation's engagement. Recent uprisings in the Arab region have exposed deep rifts among groups with competing visions of the end-goal of the transition. Some political movements are hyper-nationalistic, while others use religious discourse to achieve legitimacy – and both may be prepared to undermine Western ideas and actors along the way. Such groups rarely represent the majority of actors engaged in building the new order, but they can effectively utilise media and generalised anxieties to create suspicion. To manoeuvre in such a climate, a foundation requires strong local partnerships and sensitive ears to the ground.

Secondly, foundations can feel overwhelmed by the sheer size and complexity of the challenges and priorities of a country in transition out of war or dictatorship. The wide gap between the scale of the problems facing a transitioning country and the amount of available resources can create a sense of disempowerment. From the start, therefore, foundations must decide whether they have sufficient commitment and resources to make involvement worthwhile and, likewise, whether as donors they are prepared to accept occasional failure as an inevitable part of pursuing extraordinary impact opportunities.

Thirdly, for cross-border grantmakers, the murky and unstable circumstances in which transitions proceed can be intimidating, especially the first time. The intense pace of change places new demands on programme monitoring and recalibration, as what seems certain one month may appear implausible the next. For a foundation without prior local experience or on-ground staff, gathering sufficient accurate information and assuring the continued relevance of proposed activities and receptivity of local actors can be difficult and time-consuming.

Experience shows, however, that all these challenges can be met by acting on private foundations' intrinsic advantages. The flexibility and nimbleness of their operations relative to other donors allow them to respond quickly to unexpected events, design creative programmes and switch partners and projects when new circumstances dictate. The independence of their structures enables foundations to confront legitimacy gaps, partner with local philanthropy and espouse universal values that go beyond narrowly-defined national or partisan interests. The small scale of foundation resources relative to other grantmaking organisations creates an even stronger incentive to be strategic about allocation decisions and leverage the gaps not filled by other donors. The comparatively seasoned hands of foundation staff help to ensure greater context analysis, networking ability and reliable intermediaries. Transitions, seen in this light, underscore the need for active engagement by private foundations.

A transition frame for grantmaking

Private foundations are for the most part well-aware of the importance of transitions out of conflict and dictatorship and of the related fields of democratisation and peace-building. Many have deliberately worked in countries for years or decades to help activists and thought leaders end wars and repression and begin their own national transitions.

Yet, the decades-long record of foundation successes (and failures) in transitional contexts is largely hidden. Few foundations have an explicit grantmaking department or programme category called ‘transitions’. Even fewer evaluate those grants systematically or share grant portfolio assessments. Moreover, concepts and terms like ‘fragile states’, ‘state-building’, ‘governance’, ‘democratisation’ and ‘peace-building’ rarely figure in foundation parlance, even when that is a clear operational priority, and despite the fact that these are the terms to which the transitions literature long ago shifted and under which most non-developmental and humanitarian aid is channelled.

Less obviously political terms like ‘social change’ and ‘social justice’ are far more prevalent in foundation discourse. It is worth asking, however, whether more transition-specific terminology and programming could help foundations identify like-minded donors, accumulate learning and give greater focus to grantmaking in countries emerging from conflict or repression – all without violating charitable rules that prohibit involvement with political parties or elections and irrespective of whether a foundation operates through thematic programmes, geographic ones, or both.

The way forward is partly tied to re-examining the common practice of using segregated grantmaking categories. If a transition is best understood as a critical moment for the reconstitution of social contracts that involve overlapping political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions, then foundation programming logically requires a cross-sectoral approach. In a transition, getting experimental and breaking down artificial or counterproductive divisions between fields such as education, health and

human rights is more than just good practice; it is logical.

The wider aid sector is already moving in this direction. For example, the 2011 [*New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States*](#), developed through the forum of the [*International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding*](#), is premised on the integration of political, economic and socio-cultural policies and could serve as a positive example for foundations to consider and adapt, according to their own sectoral strengths and interests.

Section 3: Informed Risk-Taking for Disproportionate Outcomes

Having defined transitions and explained the place of foundations in the larger world of cross-border cooperation, this section outlines the logic of informed risk-taking as a principle to guide foundation engagement in transitional contexts. It provides practical tools, analysis and examples to assist foundations in making the most of the strategic opening created by transitions. It aims to guide foundations in matching their particular comparative advantages with the disproportionate opportunity for advancing public goods that a transition offers.

Although there is no common minimum definition of the public good in the realm of private philanthropic grantmaking, licensing bodies and legislation in a foundation's host country may impose some parameters. For purposes of this guide, public good is defined as a focus on assisting societies in transition to become more inclusive and states more responsive to local needs, in order to increase the probability of achieving a permanent break with armed conflict or repression. The intention is to strengthen the efforts of private foundations that are dedicated to this, while recognising that approaches to advancing such a public good will always need to be tailored to particular transitional contexts.

The meaning of informed risk-taking

As someone engaged in supporting arts and culture, I felt that we needed to live up to this moment, to capture the opportunity and maximise its potential for change. There was tension between my desire to do so and the slow pace of the institution I worked for at the time, which opted to take a wait-and-see approach to the evolving events. The moment of revolutionary change in the Arab world exposed the ability of institutions to deal with the unexpected and, ultimately, be the creative institutions they claim to be. Young Arab activists were moving fast, creating their own forums and spaces. – Interview with foundation director

Transitions are exceptional times requiring exceptional measures. For foundations to stay relevant, they need to think and act differently and to take risks. Policies and programmes that made sense in times of open conflict or dictatorship are unlikely to maintain the same relevance.

At the same time, private foundations, like any cause-oriented philanthropists, must be prudent in changing tack. Given the serious challenges that accompany societies emerging from conflict and authoritarian rule, heightened due diligence is imperative: the call to take greater risk cannot mean ignoring the 'do-no-harm' principle. Nevertheless, foundations require a more customised principle or framework to guide their actions in transitions – one that balances the imperative of due diligence with a risk-taking mind-set consistent with the far-reaching but temporary nature of transitional opportunities.

Inevitably, each foundation will have its own threshold for how much information it deems sufficient to justify taking a particular risk, as well as its own process for determining the level and type of risk in question (whether financial, legal, political, reputational, or security-related). Also, few foundations believe they would ever act in an uninformed or risk-averse fashion, even when evi-

dence occasionally shows the contrary. The framework of informed risk-taking recognises both these realities and simply advocates the following: *whatever one's normal threshold, in a transition be prepared to take more risks but assess those risks with greater than usual scrutiny and frequency.* By using this framework, a foundation prevents itself from failing to act on:

- the disproportionate outcome opportunity a transition offers;
- the comparative advantages and added value a foundation has in such contexts; and
- the due diligence requirements a significantly-altered political environment demands.

Yet, the informed risk-taking framework implies something more: a willingness to live with a bigger chance of failure. Because transitions unfold with a high degree of unpredictability, some social investments in a grantmaker's portfolio may – indeed, are likely - to fail. Stakes are high, systems are volatile, and, despite good intentions on both sides of a grant agreement, some projects will not achieve their objectives, or worse, will harm the larger transition. Here, the leadership of a foundation is needed to steer a course between fear of failure and over-confidence in success, knowing that the bets that succeed offer the chance for a depth of impact that may surpass decades of investments in non-transitional settings.

Foundations can also mitigate their risk-taking. They can create balanced portfolios of high, medium and low-risk investments. They can increase the frequency of monitoring intervals with grantees and maintain a relationship that encourages honest disclosure about unexpected mid-course developments, matched by a willingness to reprogram funds or allow fresh starts where necessary. They can make comparatively smaller grants to actors and projects that carry the biggest risks. They can also develop media relationships early in a grant cycle so that, if problems arise, informed journalists can be expected to report more fairly.

Of course, no donor wants to end up with negative press or legal difficulties that put individuals or organisations in jeopardy. Transition grantmaking, therefore, calls for increased attention to forming public communication strategies that educate both in-country and headquarter-country audiences, except when a low profile is required; building and maintaining strong local contacts and alliances; and staying well-informed about the country's power shifts and politics. In the home country, foundations can also join with donor associations in advocating laws and regulations that encourage rather than penalise sound cross-border grant-making in support of transitions.

Informed risk-taking in action

Having described the general principle of informed risk-taking, this section offers a practical template for implementation. Naturally, each foundation will develop its own approach to implementing the principle. This guide aims to improve the focus and form of the exercise.

The template of informed risk-taking has three sequential parts, structured as questions:

- Step 1: What is the nature of the change process underway in the transitional context?
- Step 2: How relevant is our foundation's mission and operating style to the new context?
- Step 3: What programmatic considerations arise when the priorities of our foundation overlap with the new context?

Step 1: What is the nature of the change process underway in the new context?

Critical lens

Our job is to try to make a critical difference, in critical places and at critical times. The tools we use need to be flexible. In a transition, you need to constantly study the situation to stay relevant. Because the fact is that, if you're no longer relevant, you're just wasting people's time. – Interview with aid agency leader

The beginning of a transition begs reappraisal on many fronts, internal as well as external. However, experience suggests it would be wrong for a foundation to begin its analysis with a focus on its own mission, instead of the situation on the ground. External reality must be the analytical starting point in times of transition, since these larger-than-life moments call for skilful and nuanced assessments that will vary greatly from place to place.

Even when a foundation has been active for many years in a particular country, a transition demands renewed questioning. Are we in a fundamentally altered political landscape? Does our operating premise about the root causes of prior war or dictatorship still hold? Do we know who is rising in the new order and who is falling from the old order? What new kinds of risk and opportunity are present?

Reassessing a formerly static situation with a fresh set of eyes is at the heart of the 'informed' component of informed risk-taking. The act of becoming informed is not, however, an exercise in dry technical research. It is active and political, in the sense of requiring closer attention than ever to the causes and consequences of power shifts. Almost every aspect of public life becomes politically fluid during transitions, often in unexpected ways. Under the Mubarak regime in Egypt, for example, citizen efforts to monitor elections and get out the vote were criminalised. Civic activists assumed that, in a post-Mubarak era, these would become unquestioned rights. Yet, under military rule in 2012, the same push toward exclusive control was evident, and some Egyptian NGOs were accused of attempts to divide the country when authorities confiscated their election-monitoring maps.

While prior experience and contacts in a country are usually major advantages in helping assess context, they can also become liabilities. To develop a fresh perspective on a country, while managing the adverse impact the new analysis may have on longstanding relationships, is not easy. Long-time grantees who risk being replaced by emergent groups can even become obstructive. At the same time, a grantmaker that lacks prior contacts or experience on the ground will, in most cases, face greater difficulties in developing solid analysis of a transition. Critical analysis must be ongoing in either case.

Foundations may take note how bilateral aid agencies have become more sophisticated in this area, following hard lessons learned over six decades of development assistance. There is now a body of practice that, in addition to foundations' own experiences, offers a helpful model. It centres on the use of country-level analytical tools (e.g., conflict assessments and power analyses) that involve extra layers of fact-checking and political assessment. These tools examine a country's political history and institutions, as well as a broad range of obstacles, risks and entry points. The underlying ethos is self-evident: unrealistic expectations or faulty responses to political and social change are less likely when the analysis is mostly right. Given the complexity and time constraints in completing such an analysis, foundations have good reason to confer with larger, more experienced aid agencies in order to exchange knowledge.

Methods of inquiry

In transitions it is important to seek out information and entry points beyond the capitals or large cities and beyond the already-familiar international and local NGOs. This comes time and time again into the conversations and feedback from the groups we talk to on the ground. – Interview with foundation representative

The moment of knowing everything about a context will never arrive. Risk-taking in transitional contexts necessarily implies action without complete knowledge. And it implies recourse to a practical set of tools and procedures for information-gathering and analysis that can help identify the true levers of change, pressure points and obstacles in the new environment.

There are various ways to gather this information and develop high-quality analysis. A foundation can give the lead to its own field or headquarters-based staff. Alternatively, it can hire experienced external consultants or pool resources and conduct joint analysis with other donors through self-organised efforts or foundation networks. The choice will vary by case, but the general default should be coordination and joint analyses unless there is a strong counter-argument. This is true for foundations considering first-time involvement in a country as well as those already operating there. Foundation networks, both regional and thematic, exist to serve this purpose.

The case for pooled efforts is both normative and practical. First, local actors are already very busy on many fronts during transitions. It is not a good use of their time, and potentially very frustrating, to receive a continuous flow of meeting requests from different donors interested in asking near-identical questions – a practice noted by grantees consistently across transitional environments. Secondly, donor collaboration helps to reduce the likelihood of duplication of work, as much of the basic information is usually already available in some form. Thirdly, cooperation at the information-gathering stage can serve as a first step in building a network of like-minded donors that may become an invaluable long-term resource.

The actual steps for gathering accurate information in a transitional context are mostly intuitive, yet rarely followed systematically:

- Read the leading texts on the country's history and politics. Doing so will, among other things, help in formulating better questions.
- Read everything over 500 words written about the country in the last year in major independent news outlets. It will capture what people on the ground are thinking and give a sense of the prevailing common wisdom.
- Use foundation networks to organise conference calls in which country experts provide briefings and answer questions about the state of play and key actors in the particular transition.
- On any mission to the country, leave the capital and the main cities and venture into the country's more remote regions.
- Use existing networks and other tools, including social media, to seek out new contacts with original perspectives – knowing that, after speaking to at least 50 diverse informants (e.g., politicians, activists, military, journalists, civic and religious leaders, academics, and local foundations), it will be much harder to end up with a flawed analysis.

Although these basic practices are all important, for foundations the exercise of gathering information will always risk bias. Some interviewees, aware of the potential to receive funds, may be inclined to provide incomplete information or gear their remarks to what they presume the donor wants to hear. Triangulating sources and probing early findings can help to minimise this risk. For a

new donor unfamiliar with the context, though, there may be no adequate substitute to visiting the country and experiencing it first-hand.

Foundation networks can play a key role here, as for example in Tunisia where two donor networks organised a four-day in-country learning programme for their members early in the transition. Networks can also play an information-sharing role through portals and affinity groups, so that a transition's political and civic leaders do not end up the subject of dozens of separate, unpublished civil society mapping exercises. A jointly-planned mapping effort may be, in fact, the single most responsible information-gathering action foundations can undertake.

Key questions

Something that made sense today might not make sense tomorrow. In a transition, you need a system that has real-time evaluation and stocktaking of the different things that you are considering doing. – Interview with foundation leader

Foundations are well-advised to draw on the tools developed by leading bilateral aid agencies as a guide in asking the questions that will lead to quality analysis. In general, the right questions centre on a limited number of themes, including:

- shifts in the balance of power;
- key obstacles to reform;
- the comparative strength of formal and informal institutions;
- emergent champions of reform;
- the main dynamics and divisions in the society at large;
- the security environment; and
- key drivers of the real and informal economy.

A good analysis, focused on these issues, can produce a nuanced picture of the local context. It may show, for example, the degree to which public opinion about the private sector, the army or another major sector could be expected to shift dramatically in the first period of a transition out of dictatorship; or the risk posed, in a post-conflict setting, of former combatants turning to private crime and endangering a transition's fragile stability; or, in either case, the principal factors favouring or undermining the underlying political settlement, without which the transition itself could be stillborn.

Beyond these questions, in the initial stage of information-gathering private foundations will also need to examine – without any presumption of future activity – the degree to which cross-border grantmaking is practicable in the country. Counter to expectations a decade ago, obstacles to foreign funding are on the rise. Some countries continue to open their doors to cross-border funding (e.g., Tunisia and Burma), while others, once open, close theirs (e.g., Egypt and Russia). Understanding the local regulatory framework for cross-border grantmaking is essential, even if, in practice, foundations find creative ways of working alongside the rules to dispatch money or other forms of support to their chosen grantees. Seeking competent legal advice is always recommended.

Step 2: How relevant is our foundation's mission and operating style to the new context?

Risk appetites vary so you need to know the risk-aversion level within your foundation. In some cases, it is the living donor, even more than the staff, who sees a close fit with his or her foundation and is the one most ready to move when a transition begins, to try and take advantage of the moment. In other cases, the opposite is true: field-based personnel are excited about opportunities they clearly see, but headquarters puts on the brakes. – Interview with foundation leader

Questions of fit

Having gathered sufficient information and developed a robust analysis of the context, a foundation is ready to look inward and consider its own potential relevance to the transition. This involves assessing the degree of overlap between what external reality compels a foundation to consider (or reconsider) about the country, and what its mandate and capacities commit it to prioritise.

In most cases there will be some degree of fit, and the foundation will need to determine if there is enough. It can be tempting to identify a fit where one does not truly exist. The emotional pull of witnessing a country break with years of war or repression can be so powerful that it may cloud otherwise sober judgment and lead to exaggerated interpretations of foundation mandates and capacities.

Alternatively, foundation priorities that at first glance seem distant from a country's new needs can, on deeper analysis, present an important opening. For example, reproductive health may not appear to be of urgent concern in the early months of a country's transition, but the electoral programme of a rising political force may include plans to restrict women's access to family planning services. The reintegration of female former combatants may also not appear a priority in the early months of a tenuous power-sharing pact, but, if deferred, could threaten a country's fragile social fabric. A foundation with a mandate and prior knowledge about either issue could have an important role to play in such contexts.

Yet, even when a foundation's mission has an objective overlap with the transitional context, internal rules and practices may present obstacles. Trustees who only meet once a year govern some foundations, slowing or preventing the ability to act. Some operate on the basis of multi-year grants, making it difficult to adapt rapidly when the assumptions underlying those grants alter. Many foundations are restricted to supporting registered entities and may not immediately discern a way to support more informal actors or movements that are at the forefront of change but lack infrastructure and financial capacity. Other donors may lack field presence, which can affect their ability or willingness to enter an unfamiliar country in the midst of radical change. Still others may have field presence but not devolve authority for decision-making on grants. Shrinking endowments and programme budgets can also discourage boards from making new commitments that arise unexpectedly.

If a foundation identifies an objective fit between its mission and the new context, however, it can often overcome these complications with long-term planning and a dose of creativity within existing systems.

Readiness to act

Innovative responses can come in many forms when there is a readiness to act. For example, foundations restricted to working with registered entities have sometimes used local intermediaries (e.g., university centres) with the experience and judgment to administer a programme of small grants to informal and emerging civic groups. Some large foundations called extraordinary meetings of their trustees to authorise special appropriations when the Arab Spring began. If the budget of a foundation's country-specific programme is too small to respond to new opportunities, funds can also be loaned by another programme or drawn exceptionally from reserves. As the foundation sector's experience with transitions broadens and deepens, more foundations are beginning to take these and other proactive steps – especially larger ones that cannot operate with the same flexibility and speed as small family foundations.

Beyond these ad hoc solutions, foundations can also develop systemic approaches to respond to transitional opportunities:

- First, foundation boards can consider developing a standing protocol or *Transition Response Policy* (TRP) that would function as an overarching policy for established thematic and regional programmes when periods of war and repressive rule end. It could save precious time in cases in which, for example, boards or management teams of a foundation meet infrequently. It could provide advance guidance to staff on how to gather data swiftly and answer the due diligence questions described above. Such a policy could incorporate risk-taking and exploratory grantmaking as guiding principles, encouraging foundations to test, and where warranted support, new ideas and actors.
- The natural counterpart to a TRP would be a *Transitions Contingency Fund* (TCF). Such a fund would be tapped only as needed in cases of unanticipated transitional openings, justified as a measure to increase preparedness. It could be linked to access to a foundation's reserves, or be built separately and allowed to grow with an annual infusion from sources mandated by the trustees. Considerable authority for decision-making over the use of funds could be devolved to staff or advisers in the field. The TCF could have a designated focus on small grants, allowing time to test concepts and vet grantee organisations while larger grant portfolios are being considered.

Although this TRP/TCF approach would not suit all foundations, it could help many avoid missed opportunities and ensure a smoother, more consistent internal method of assessment and response. Some of the larger aid agencies have already established thematic contingency policies with earmarked monies that are kept ready for unexpected major change. One bilateral agency, USAID, has gone a step further in establishing an Office of Transition Initiatives that is akin to a transition rapid-response unit within the larger organisation. In operation since 1994, it has the mandate and budget to provide “fast, flexible, short-term assistance” in response to windows of opportunity. Similar transition-related funds also exist at the multilateral level, including the UN Peacebuilding Fund and others at the World Bank.

Step 3: What programmatic considerations arise when the priorities of our foundation overlap with the new context?

When there is a clear alignment between transitional opportunities on the ground and a foundation's internal strengths and operating capacity, the review of potential programmatic strategies begins in earnest. Four overarching questions arise: Who and what will we fund? How long will we stay? How will we measure impact? What profile do we want to project? These always need to be asked and answered in a comprehensive way at the outset of grantmaking. In transitional settings,

though, wise donors will regularly reassess overall strategy and activities, perhaps as often as every six to eight weeks.

Who and what will we fund?

Transitions present opportunities for foundations to support ‘big things’, such as building new public institutions, enhancing the policy-generating capacity of civil society or nurturing new social and political norms. Opportunities of the same nature and magnitude do not arise in contexts of entrenched conflict or authoritarian rule. Transitions, accordingly, trigger a specific set of considerations about target actors and projects. Foundations must consider at least four issues:

- changing versus maintaining partners;
- the balance of support between public entities and civil society;
- the balance of support between local and international civil society; and
- funder coordination.

Changing versus maintaining partners

A society is not a monolith. It also includes many populist and sectarian forces that are opposed to the values and ideals of a liberal democracy. To open societies up further during a transitional window, sometimes you need to be less against the government that is ruling them and more focused on transforming the conservatism and populism that is raging within the society. – Interview with transitions expert

Transitions naturally spark profound changes in relationships. From families to workplaces, local communities to the national arena, old relationships experience rupture, distancing or new solidarity. A foundation with an existing set of grantees at the moment a transition begins needs to choose between renewing those relationships, perhaps with a different programmatic emphasis; striking out to find the next wave of change-makers; or some combination of the two.

Choosing the right partners is always important but becomes even more crucial in the aftermath of war or repression, when civil society itself, often the bedrock of foundation grantmaking, is changing on multiple levels. Leading civil society members who were the object of early bets placed by clever donors prior to the transition may enter politics and become implementers of the reforms they designed during their days as dissidents; younger leaders may emerge, creating friction with an older generation of gatekeepers; and some of the best talent will be hired out of civil society into international agencies, including foundations. These are common phenomena. Foundation grantmaking in a transition should be alert to these shifts, to avoid exacerbating foreseeable negative consequences for local institution-building.

Foundations are not bound to the funding of specific entities. Over time, they have determined that often they could help most by taking on the role of process-catalysers, serving as convenors for national actors and creating funding streams that incentivise collaboration on crucial policy issues, as the Hewlett Foundation did on government transparency and accountability during Mexico’s transition out of 70 years of one-party rule. Bilateral agencies often lack the legitimacy to take on this role, making it all the more important for foundations to fill the breach.

Private philanthropy can play an especially powerful role as a catalyst or enabler of processes that foster inclusive political settlements. These are often the cornerstone of successful transitions – and difficult to achieve, as the Arab experience shows. Although foundations might be generally

averse to funding conferences, this is a situation when convening a well-timed meeting can have real impact. Activities that bring together divided or dispersed actors, as occurred before and during the transitions in South Africa and Northern Ireland, are often cited as success stories by donors. Such gatherings can take place inside the country (e.g., at a neutral university facility) or outside, if the situation requires.

A process-oriented approach may also help address the increasingly ad hoc way that citizens organise themselves to press for change. This is one of the emerging challenges of responding to 21st century transitions. In the past in Europe and the Americas, it was more common to encounter activists who were part of registered organisations with mature leadership and an identifiable social base. Today, informal groupings of youth, urban poor and non-unionised workers are sparking popular uprisings and reform movements. To help reach unregistered new partners like these who may better reflect a country's transitional landscape, foundations need a creative grantmaking approach that could involve, for example, working through independent and trusted local institutions.

Public entities versus civil society

*In Northern Ireland, the new government was initially reluctant to take on informal community policing units that were in some cases terrorising neighbourhoods. With local partners and a carefully-designed programme, we piloted an effort to shift the community groups to a monitoring role, with punishment left to local authorities. Despite initial resistance, the security services were later grateful for a model they could adopt and build upon. – **Interview with foundation leader***

When new governments lack capacity, and civil society struggles to move from opposition to proposition, is it time to develop and act on a revised theory of change? In a transition, the state may no longer be the biggest enemy to reform movements, and civil society may no longer be the same driver of change. Many private foundations, nevertheless, struggle to gauge how far to move, if at all, in supporting the state-building enterprise, especially considering the comparatively small resources they have at their disposal in relation to the public sector's total needs. There is also persistent fear of being seen as a political actor.

Yet, the choice between support for governmental and non-governmental bodies may not be as stark as it seems. In transitional periods, a foundation can maintain a focus on civil society, but with a broader definition of the term. Civil society is not limited to NGOs. It includes think tanks, trade unions, universities, professional associations, cooperatives, religious bodies, cultural groups, social movements and charitable organisations, any number of which may rise in relevance and forge partnerships with state bodies. Government, too, requires a broader definition. Beyond the executive and legislative branches, it can include a wide range of institutional actors able to operate with varying degrees of independence, including citizen review boards and arm's length agencies such as anti-corruption commissions, ombudsman offices and human rights commissions. While making sure to respect prohibitions against donor support for political work as defined in U.S. and European charity laws, such bodies could warrant funding consideration by foundations when they are established early in a transition but lack basic capacity and start-up funds. Related opportunities can also arise when power is being devolved outward from the centre, as the people elected or appointed to positions in regional or local government typically have less experience and could benefit greatly from skills training and exposure to good governance principles.

Transitions also tend to see an array of ad hoc, hybrid bodies comprised of both state and civil society members and established by an interim or successor government. These include initiatives meant to play a transcendental role in support of the transition, such as constituent assemblies

responsible for developing a new constitution, truth commissions authorised to investigate a legacy of mass abuse or special transitional steering committees, such as Tunisia's High Commission for the Realisation of Revolutionary Objectives, Political Reforms and Democratic Transition established in 2011. Foundations may, with modest funds, be able to boost the reach and impact of these vital bodies – a role that breaks down the traditional bifurcation between supporting state or civil society. In a transition, the right partners, and the spectrum of choices, look different than in other times or contexts.

Local versus international civil society

When you are in a dictatorship situation, international NGOs are useful in terms of amplifying the message on the international scene. They can also provide critical intelligence, helping to map the landscape and principal players. But in a transition, we believe that the focus and priority of our funding has to shift to local actors and their needs. – Interview with foundation director

As offers of technical assistance and advice engulf local actors at the outset of a transition, local civil society often struggles to make sense of the influx and take full advantage of it. Key personnel may be recruited to work at higher salaries with international groups. International organisations may move in and compete with each other and with locals for new streams of funding. Duplicative calls for proposals by donors can drive duplicative activities, especially in terms of conferences and training. Before long, friction and tensions can arise between and among national and international NGOs.

How should foundations anticipate and respond to these recurrent syndromes through their cross-border grantmaking? Best practice suggests they should treat transitions as periods when the international role loses centrality to the national voice, which is suddenly no longer tightly controlled by the state or caught in the grip of war. Although international civil society actors can contribute important and specialised technical advice in the early period of a transition, overall patterns of involvement reflect an over-supply of expert assistance, a limited customisation to context and a lack of outreach and access to key groups outside the main cities – patterns to which an uncoordinated foundation sector has frequently contributed.

These patterns can be minimised through creative grantmaking. Beyond greater donor coordination, foundations can design their programmes to harness the international role without prioritising it. Institutional partnerships between locals and internationals can be fostered through calls for joint proposals that are structured to facilitate the transfer of skills and responsibilities, for example by having a four-year grant agreement in which the international is the formal grantee in the first two years and the local is the grantee in the last two. Drawing on their particular strengths, internationals could also be hired for more targeted tasks, such as to conduct early and quick-impact research or actor mapping that fills initial knowledge gaps. In general, though, local actors, as the primary agents of change, need to have the largest say in identifying the type and quantity of international civil society support they require.

Related issues arise when diaspora groups want to play a role in the transition phase. Sometimes they bridge the gap between national and international expertise effectively. In other instances, though, they lack credibility or up-to-date knowledge of conditions on the ground. In Libya, some diaspora groups are filling large gaps in gender programmes and service delivery that cannot be managed by those who lived under authoritarian rule for decades. Even then, however, their motives may be called into question by locals who experienced the hardship of the years before the transition.

Funder coordination

If you intervene in a particular place today, especially a mediatised transition, the spotlight is more intensive, which can have the consequence of making donors risk-averse. But by the same token, the increased accessibility and visibility of information about what each donor is doing could – and should – create a greater incentive for coordinated action and joint mobilisation. The problem is that even though foundations can easily find out what others are doing, they often have little interest in doing so. The problem of weak coordination is more one of will, and less one of capacity.

– Interview with foundation director

Donor coordination is nearly always a virtue, but it is all the more so in the heady setting of a transition out of armed conflict or authoritarian rule. When full cooperation works, it can amplify the impact of each entity involved. During the early stages of transitions in the former Yugoslavia and Tunisia, for example, deliberate efforts to pool funds led to important collaboration. Donors made funds available to advance the European Union integration processes in the former case and for locally-determined capacity-building projects in an economically-marginalised region in the latter. Beyond its direct benefits, donor collaboration of this sort also helps to diminish the risk, so often present in a transition, of the cultivation of an artificially large and unsustainable NGO sector.

Coordination in practice requires a proactive effort to stay aware of other foundations' activities. Good grantmaking will proceed from a thorough prior scan of what is currently funded or planned and can encompass basic exchanges of information about a transitioning country, meetings to discuss future plans with other foundations and organised divisions of labour for sector-specific interventions (e.g., on rule of law, security or women's rights). The simple rule should be to coordinate early and often. Donor associations in Europe and North America already make this possible, offering the tools to meet easily and cheaply across borders.

In the right circumstances, foundations can go beyond coordination within their own sector. They can attempt to catalyse it with other donors and investors, including like-minded foreign ministries, multilateral aid agencies and the private sector. At present, this is rarely done, although the OECD and UNDP increasingly engage in the interface between private philanthropy and other aid and development sectors.

Going further still, coordination could itself become a foundation niche in contexts of transition, providing another rewarding way in which to play an acupuncture role. For example, in areas of policy priority for the country in question, foundations could fund a coordinator to maintain a web platform to support continuous information exchange about key funding opportunities, events, training courses and research during the first years of a transition. The annual cost of establishing this would be a fraction of the cost of a single hotel conference, and the benefits in terms of efficiency and transparency could be immense.

How long will we stay?

The duration of a foundation's involvement in a country transitioning out of war or dictatorship is intricately tied to the prior question of whom and what to fund. A foundation must consider, at a minimum, the approximate number of years it will engage and, along with that, the potential complementary role of local philanthropy.

The long and short

I would plead for multi-year investment in key organisations. Build their capacity and essentially think about how you do that over the long term, as opposed to just being involved in the glamour of the moment. There has to be an effort to leave behind a sustainable infrastructure. – Interview with foundation director

Experience underscores the importance of informing grantees, from the start, of the expected duration of a grantmaking programme. Every foundation will naturally have its own appetite for how long to stay the course in a particular case, but usually less than four years is too short and five to ten years is ideal. A new donor, in particular, may require many months just to conduct initial analysis, find partners and begin to implement programmes. And unlike aid agencies, foundations do not have the luxury of guaranteed continuity in the form of an embassy that will remain engaged long after any transitional aid mechanism winds down. The importance of a responsible entry and exit is, in this respect, greater for foundations.

Ideally, foundation grantmakers will invest both heavily in the short term and incrementally over the longer term. As transitions are rare windows of opportunity for political, economic and socio-cultural transformation, quick catalytic injections of funding, even in small amounts, can jump-start desired changes. At the same time, experienced foundations know that some changes in a society, even if facilitated by the early period of transition, will not be completed for a decade or more. Accordingly, donors with the resources and ability to see these changes through to fruition have reason to do so. They have time to build an internal learning and adaptation component into their programmes and can commit to be experimental and flexible upfront, so that the longer-term investments build upon lessons learned along the way.

For foundations that plan to be present for a shorter period (e.g., four to five years), partnership development with donors able to stay longer and with local entities is advisable. Shorter-stay donors may also consider experimenting with social investment strategies in which they support emerging local social entrepreneurs. They establish businesses to address a public need, such as health services or energy production, and if successful become self-sustaining within a few years. This method is proving popular with young change-agents in North Africa who believe they can achieve greater social impact through entrepreneurship than standard civil society or public sector approaches. Foundations that do not plan to stay beyond a few years may alternatively think about focusing their support on the equivalent of the UN's Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) – an approach calibrated to the speed of change in the initial stages of a transition. QIPs are low-cost, small projects that aim to build confidence in early stages of peace-building.

Regardless of the approach, foundations experienced in transitional contexts should plan their strategies based on foreseeable patterns of overall funding streams. The first few years of a transition often coincide with an intensification of investment from multilateral and bilateral agencies, as occurred in post-conflict transitions in West and Central Africa. Four to five years out, much of that money will have begun to dry up. From day one, therefore, responsible foundations can work with grantees to help prepare them for this predictable, often-destabilising ebb and flow. Foundations can also assist long-term grantees in the final years of a relationship with financial planning and the search for alternative donors.

Connecting with local philanthropy

Our foundation has as a core mission to strengthen local forms of philanthropic giving. This encourages a broad engagement with transitioning countries around the world where private giving had been previously underdeveloped. The strategy is simple and avoids the dangers of encouraging local NGOs to become dependent on foreign assistance. Its application varies greatly from country to country, but over the years we have found that the community foundation model is one particularly well-suited to societies in transition. It provides technical support as well as small start-up grants to enable under-served groups to organise and generate local resources for their communities. It allows excluded groups to begin to take charge of their own inclusion in the transition process.

– Interview with a cross-border foundation director

Cross-border grantmakers may face a number of foreseeable practical challenges when supporting societies in transition. These include regulatory frameworks and legitimacy gaps, as well as limited context knowledge and finite programming periods. Partnerships with local philanthropy can be vital to overcoming these challenges. Cross-border donors can benefit from accumulated wisdom about local realities, reduce exposure as an outsider and ensure responsible exits, inasmuch as they boost prospects of programme sustainability. Foreign foundations are rightly drawn into transitions abroad when they arise; but unlike local foundations, few will choose to create a permanent base in the country.

In many transitional contexts, the capacity of local philanthropy may be limited due to years of operating within an inhospitable environment. Basic foundation practices such as transparent grantmaking may not yet exist. Local foundations, if created by wealthy expatriates from the diaspora, may be as suspect as foreign donors. In an extreme case, Libya, the state did not allow a single foundation or civil society organisation to exist except those associated with the Gaddafi family. Yet even in less extreme cases, finding local donors with sufficient grantmaking capacity, as well as shared objectives, can be challenging. Building partnerships and trust tends to be a long-term and gradual process. To start, small pilot collaborations over a common transitional interest can test the ground for future joint programming.

A more forceful option exists, however. In the early years of transition in places such as Southern Africa, Central Europe and the former Yugoslavia, a group of international foundations made support for local philanthropic infrastructure (including philanthropy centres and membership associations) the central element of grantmaking. In the best cases, such a strategy combines the comparative strengths of large foreign foundations, including experience with different models and practices of professional philanthropy, with the intrinsic strengths of local foundations, including durability of commitment and depth of contextual understanding. The foundations' sensible postulate was that until indigenous channels of funding are in place and at scale, transitioning countries will remain dependent on international aid.

How will we measure impact?

There is a powerful pressure on public money to be controlled by results frameworks, quantitative indicators and stringent accountability devices. All of these undermine rather than foster the flexibility you need in a transition. But foundation money is not taxpayer money, and so, theoretically at least, it is much more flexible. A wealthy private philanthropist can reach into his wallet and hand over five million dollars to somebody over lunch and say "go have a good time". And that is why it is disappointing to see so many private foundations undermine their flexibility advantage, by mimicking the worst measurement practices of public agencies.

– Interview with transitions expert

The foundation sector has moved in recent years toward greater expectations of accountability for the use of grant funds. Grantees are expected to systematically measure the impact of their work, and foundation officers are under similar pressures from their leadership and boards. Greater rigor in performance assessment is naturally welcome. Yet, transition outcomes – and political change processes more generally – are particularly unsuited to such quantification. These measures, if applied rigidly, risk suffocating the innovation and flexibility that make politically-attuned grantmaking possible in the first place.

Presently, ‘impact’ is the main watchword of the field. However, that may be the wrong thing to try to measure in a transition. It is by definition a longer-term macro-goal (e.g., in the nature of preventing future conflict), for which any donor or grantee can only ever take partial credit. A system that attempts to monitor and evaluate ‘progress against intended outcomes’ (e.g., increasing stakeholder interactions or changing the terms of a public debate) is a more practical and honest measure. Likewise, it is difficult for any donor or grantee to make persuasive attribution claims regarding the cause of specific results within the policy change process. There are simply too many contextual variables and too many actors involved. Focusing on ‘contribution’, rather than seeking to attribute a specific outcome to one’s efforts alone, is more reliable and accurate.

The reality is that it is intrinsically more difficult to measure many of the things that count most in transitions, such as democratic culture or improved well-being, than it is to measure the impact of ventures such as vaccination drives. A foundation that is too rigid in measuring outcomes in periods of transition risks unnecessarily replicating the practices of bilateral donors, who envy the comparative independence and flexibility of private philanthropy decision-making. Rigid quantitative metrics can also produce the unintended effect of increasing competition among grantees, incentivising them to exaggerate the results of their work and claim excessive credit.

What transitions most need, in fact, is for foundations to coordinate among themselves, learning from each other’s successes and failures, to boost experimentation and flexibility. While some foundations are moving toward more internal discussion of failed projects, this appears to be the last frontier for inter-foundation sharing. Few publish detailed evaluations of the outcomes of the risks they have taken in transitional contexts, even though there is a wealth of valuable lessons that could inspire other foundations to better define and measure what matters most when a country passes out of conflict or authoritarian rule. The two clear points of consensus for now are that in transitions it is important, first, to evaluate more frequently, and secondly, to view evaluation as a device to create feedback loops on the potential utility of mid-course programme adjustments.

What profile will we have?

What I saw in Burma was a gold rush of assistance: lots of big actors moving in with hundreds of millions of dollars, but extremely low capacity on the Burmese side to absorb the assistance. Now if you are a private actor, the tendency is to say: “I want to carve out my own thing that I’m good at”. If one advised that donor: “Look, the Norwegian government is about to put \$2.5 billion of assistance into this country; could you conceive of taking a strategic role as a lever to make sure this money is better spent?” In general, foundations would say “no”, since they would rather have their own grantees and get credit for their own programmes. Being a lever is not as strategically pleasing or high profile, but it could make a big difference for the Burmese transition. – Interview with transitions expert

The largest and oldest private foundations have a substantial track record of cross-border grant-making in support of transitions, but not a high-profile one. Some have been content to support actors and projects for years without seeking attention for their contribution, beyond a basic acknowledgment of support in grantee materials and publications. These choices are made freely and selflessly at times. In other cases, such as volatile security environments, the absence of high profile is a necessity more than a choice. In such circumstances, foundations may make grants through trusted intermediaries or re-granting schemes, or simply by operating quietly behind the scenes. This can be problematic for a foundation committed to transparency, but exceptional circumstances may justify it.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, there may be good arguments for a foundation to decide that public communication should form a major aspect of its programming strategy. It may wish to use its knowledge of the intricacies of a transitional situation to engage in public education in its home country. It may use field presence to disseminate original information and analysis about a pending humanitarian crisis. Taking advantage of its institutional independence and legitimacy, a foundation may even choose to make its voice heard within the transitioning country, for example by writing or speaking publicly when a grantee is harassed by interim authorities angered by its work to expose corruption. Although speaking out in this way could potentially harm a foundation's freedom and flexibility in a country, following consultations with local partners, it may sometimes be necessary.

There is a long tradition, however, of working behind the scenes – as so many foundations have done in transitions from Brazil to Russia and Egypt. Although this may conflict with general demands for increased transparency and accountability, it may be demanded by the realities of engagement in politically-sensitive situations. NGOs and donors in Syria are consciously deciding to work in this way to address the immense humanitarian crisis caused by the war there. Yet, regardless of a foundation's public stance regarding communication, it should maintain close contact with local actors and other foundation donors in the country.

Conclusion: An Ongoing Conversation

I convinced my board to get involved right after the Mubarak regime fell, when there were so many new problems to be tackled. We are part of the community and therefore have to be part of the change. – Interview with a local corporate foundation director

The grantmaking framework presented here comprises two simple propositions: first, that by their nature transitions are an opportunity for international and local donors to achieve disproportionate political, economic and socio-cultural outcomes; and secondly, that foundations have a comparative advantage in relation to such historical moments that should be seized. Local government investments are often frozen or contested in transitions, while bilateral and other aid is frequently conditioned, slow to be allocated or inaccessible to unconventional actors. Given their comparative flexibility and speed, private foundations can make targeted interventions with relatively small amounts of money that can result in potentially large rewards. They can marshal seasoned talent and diverse in-house expertise in responding to transitional challenges. With their relative independence and legitimacy, foundations also have more latitude to be experimental and catalytic in their funding priorities.

Many, nevertheless, fear making decisions that could exacerbate challenging situations on the ground. ‘Failed’ philanthropic interventions in past transitions in places such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Guatemala and Somalia have led some to a wait-and-see approach rather than a proactive one. Such a cautionary impulse is understandable, but it is important to keep the negative examples in context. There are scores of cases in which private philanthropy is associated with transformative change in transitional moments, from Eastern Europe to West Africa, and from South America to South Asia. To bring these and other stories to the surface, and the lessons they offer, ongoing conversation is needed. This guide is intended as a first step in that direction.

The creation of a donor network or affinity group focused specifically on post-authoritarian and post-conflict transitions could be a further step. It could be established through existing thematic and regional networks or as a stand-alone initiative. Once in place, the group could serve as a platform for sharing information, analysis and experience, and encouraging collaboration on a country-by-country basis as transitional opportunities arise. Under the leadership of foundations with substantial field presence and track records in transitions, it could also help promote evaluation of the sector’s successes and failures. A transition affinity group of this sort could likewise serve as a forum for day-after transitional planning for countries on the verge of conflict termination or democratic restoration. In parallel, the group could develop a set of transition-focused voluntary principles to guide and strengthen future grantmaking.

The disproportionate outcome opportunities are manifestly available for private foundations interested in transitions. With a few practical steps, the sector could set itself a more focused agenda in order to leverage its natural advantages and better respond to these unique historical openings. In so doing, foundations might profoundly assist these societies as they seek to establish the political, economic and social conditions to prevent a relapse into mass violence or repression.

Ten “Do’s” of Foundation Grantmaking in Transitional Contexts

1. Respond in real time

Things happen fast, and as an Egyptian related to me at a meeting in Brussels, an EU official had said to them that their “revolution fell at the wrong time in our two-year budget cycle”. By contrast, the head of the Middle East programme of this foundation went to a Board meeting with a \$5 million budget, and the board gave him \$50 million and said “allocate it by next month”. Speed is significant. Having the ability to move quickly is remarkable. – Interview with transition expert

2. Raise your risk tolerance

The big problem is the way that many foundations think about giving money to people. My analogy would be that these are innovation investments in times of transition, and you should think about grant funding as risk capital investments. You should expect half of your money to fail, a quarter to just tip over and do something, and a quarter to really take off and succeed. If I was working for dead people, I would regard failure as a necessary price of success. But I don’t think many foundations think in that way. – Interview with foundation trustee

3. Look outside before looking inside

Are you about your own values or are you looking at what that society needs in order to move forward? That is a fundamental confusion, I think, in the eyes of many foundations, because they think they are doing work for other people. They don’t often reflect on the ways in which their own priorities are shaping the intervention, and not the other way around. They are not necessarily reflecting on whether a particular intervention is what that society as a whole needs when it is in the middle of changing Foundations can definitely help promote universal values that are absent in societies emerging out of the abyss. But they still need to focus first on what the society itself needs. – Interview with foundation trustee

4. Think politically

Transitions are, by definition, periods of political change. And perhaps this explains some of the reticence of foundations. Is there a way to be political in your actions without being seen as political? Philanthropy feels it always needs to be apolitical. But in fact we need to be more political, not less, especially in how we analyse the situation on the ground when a transition is underway. All areas of change, from trade policy to employment to health and education, involve political dimensions and political choices – whether we admit it or not. – Roundtable comment

5. Leverage your strengths as a sector

Foundations have so many advantages. Nobody in government stays in a position for a long time, so you have a constant reinvention of the wheel and re-learning of the curve, and it’s devastating to public actors. In private foundations, personnel may stay for 15 years. This has a flipside, of course, if they’re not good, but on the whole it is better. Related to that is greater flexibility to hire personnel. It would be hard for some bilaterals in Cairo to hire Egyptian personnel, but Ford can do that. Also, if you join the foreign ministry, you have to have a standard set of qualifications. Maybe what you really need is a local process-oriented person who may not have that other experience, but you can target a grassroots organiser who would never pass a civil service exam, and she’s the right person. – Interview with transition expert

6. Coordinate early and often

There are a lot more philanthropic structures like Ariadne and Arab Foundations Forum that are beginning to play a role in convening and urging people to talk to one another before they rush in. Funders are more aware that this emerging infrastructure is good for learning about what is happening on the ground. Donor networks should be the first port of call in many cases. These can also be a good place to begin to explore options for pooled resources and donor coalitions, which give everyone greater legitimacy. – Interview with foundation representative

7. Look beyond civil society

There was an eye-opener experience I had in the Balkans, where I would visit on the same day, in a town of about 80,000 inhabitants, a big NGO which was the country's largest, with a staff of 25, each with laptops, and the director was being driven around in a limousine with a driver. On the same day I would visit the mayor of this town and he had only one computer for his whole office and had to drive himself. It changed my perspective. If we as foundations don't take the risk to work with public actors, then who is going to do this? From then on, we tried as much as possible to build this culture of cooperation between civil society and public actors in transitional contexts. It has been an important feature of our work. The goal is no longer to strengthen civil society as such, but to work with them and to build this culture of cooperation with the government and public actors. We think that it is extremely important for sustainability of the programmes we have. – Interview with foundation leader

8. Exercise the freedom to measure flexibly

I envy colleagues who can simply measure mortality rates and tie them to disease or shelter availability, whereas there are so many variables in the realm in which we work. Anyone in our space needs to grapple with the fact that no matter how much energy you put into measuring impact, you may never be able to precisely say what that impact is. Transitions require a different kind of metric. – Interview with aid agency leader

9. Embrace the failures

There is a lot of talk in the foundation world about accepting and learning from failure. Yet, it is hard to find donors brave enough to publish evaluations of their unsuccessful grants, even though this might push forward the field. I heard of one U.S. donor that circulates an internal award for the 'worst grant' close-out memo every month. If we could encourage wider sharing and seriousness about learning from failure, I think we could move ahead much faster when it comes to our work in transitional societies. – Comment in a roundtable discussion

10. Support processes that increase inclusiveness

What you really needed in Egypt in the first six months was a much bigger dialogue process and easing off on rushing to elections, and instead having negotiations. Whether outsiders could have helped make that happen is a question, but that hasn't been a big part of the transition paradigm. Assistance has been focused on elections, new constitutions and so forth. These look like the building blocks, but these building blocks have been undermined by the lack of a more central building block: an inclusive political settlement. And the problem with that building block is that it is not very amenable to technical assistance. – Interview with transitions expert

Acknowledgments

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In addition, research findings were discussed at roundtable consultations for foundation leaders and representatives in London, New York and San Francisco, attended by a total of 80 participants and generously hosted by the Ariadne European Human Rights Funders Network, Ford Foundation and Compton Foundation, respectively. A further roundtable was held in Cairo by the Gerhart Center. A final draft of the publication was reviewed critically by ten expert readers.

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Quotations that appear throughout the guide are identified by category of respondent, rather than attributed by name. They were chosen as reflections of the most prominent recurring themes in the interviews and consultations.

The names of all those who contributed to this publication through interviews, consultations and feedback are posted [here](#). A list of suggested additional readings on the subject of philanthropy and transitions, which will be updated periodically, is posted in the same location.

An Arabic translation of this publication, which will include additional material on foundation engagement in the context of the Arab transitions, will be made available on the websites of the Gerhart Center and IFIT.

■ The full English version of this report may be accessed online at <http://goo.gl/prZ6ow>



INSTITUTE FOR INTEGRATED TRANSITIONS

About IFIT

The Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT) is an independent international initiative based in Barcelona. IFIT is the first nongovernmental organisation dedicated to the integration of policymaking in the areas of democracy, development, rule of law and security in periods of political transition in fragile and conflict-affected states. Through its global work, the Institute aims to help transform current practice away from piecemeal interventions and toward more comprehensive solutions that can help prevent the recurrence of authoritarianism or civil war in transitioning societies.

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THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

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About the Gerhart Center

Established in 2006 at the American University in Cairo, the Gerhart Center serves as a provider of knowledge and resources for strengthening philanthropic and civic practice in the Arab region. In addition to disseminating research and policy papers, the Center is committed to building capacity among foundations and related civic action groups and enhancing the enabling environment for citizen-led development. Through university-based programs and networks, the Gerhart Center also strengthens civic education and next generation leadership among Arab youth.

The Center is named for Dr. John D. Gerhart, President of AUC from 1998 to 2002, whose career was devoted to African education and development. Dr. Barbara Ibrahim serves as founding Director. For more information about the Gerhart Center, please visit www.aucegypt.edu/research/gerhart.

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